

...ATU under siege at TriMet

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Duke Shepard, labor liaison for Gov. John Kitzhaber, confirmed to Lehrbach that the governor doesn't plan to reappoint him. The plan is instead to replace Lehrbach with Gresham small business consultant Travis Stovall. If so, that would leave the seven-member Board with no representative of organized labor. Oregon statute doesn't mandate a labor seat on transit district boards, but it's customary to have at least one.

On Jan. 23, the Northwest Oregon Labor Council Executive Board directed that a letter be sent to Kitzhaber, asking for Lehrbach to be retained. Barring that, union officials would like the Board to continue to have a representative from organized labor.

Lehrbach said TriMet Board members typically serve two terms, and he'd like to serve a second four-year term.

"They're within their rights," says Local 757 lobbyist Jim Markee, "but we're somewhat disappointed in the governor's office that they would choose to remove the labor person on the Board."

For his part, Lehrbach says he serves at Kitzhaber's pleasure but asks

that if he be replaced, he at least get a phone call from the governor himself.

[The governor's office also plans to appoint Bruce Warner to replace Board chair Richard Van Beveren, whose term expires Feb. 24. Warner is a former executive director of the Portland Development Commission and of the Oregon Department of Transportation.]

Local 757 represents 2,000 bus and rail operators, mechanics, and support staff at TriMet. They've been without a contract since Nov. 30, 2009. But the union is defending its members' rights through legal action.

Markee was able to win a change in state law in 2007 putting public transit workers into the category of public employees who are barred from striking — but who may resolve contracts through binding arbitration instead. Under binding arbitration, a neutral arbitrator picks whichever side's final offer is more reasonable.

But that process has been delayed many months by legal charges the union filed with the state Employment Relations Board (ERB). ERB administers the state's Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act, and in September, it agreed with Local 757 that TriMet wrongfully submitted a final of-

fer to the arbitrator that was different from the final offer it had presented to the union in mediation.

In a separate case, still pending, Local 757 charges that TriMet unlawfully denied cost of living increases and began deducting health insurance contributions from employee paychecks — without bargaining. TriMet's union workers until then didn't have to pay directly out of pocket for health insurance — something which used to be standard for workers. Total premiums are now \$1,500 a month.

Meanwhile, Hunt and others at Local 757 are concerned TriMet may try to change the law that requires binding arbitration. In a Jan. 16 editorial that Hunt says might as well have been written by TriMet management, the Oregonian editorial board warned that what the Legislature gives, it can take away. Markee, the Local 757 lobbyist, said TriMet tried unsuccessfully to get a pre-session committee hearing about it. Fetsch, the agency spokesperson, said TriMet doesn't intend to pursue such legislation in the February 2012 short session.

As for the long-awaited arbitration, Hunt said it could begin as early as March.

IBEW #48's Gilliam saves life of choking colleague using Heimlich

The IBEW Local 48 Safety Committee presented member Kim Gilliam with a special life-saving recognition award at the Jan. 25 general membership union meeting.

Gilliam, a general foreman for EC Company, is credited with saving the life of union brother Warren Tokuhisa on Nov. 7. The two were eating lunch in the general foreman's trailer at Intel when Tokuhisa began choking on a bagel after taking a drink of juice.

"He started choking really hard, then he slumped over and his head hit the table," said Gilliam, who yelled out to two other general foremen — Local 48 members Dave Parker and Allan Minor — eating lunch in the trailer.

Gilliam then picked Tokuhisa off his chair and immediately began administering the Heimlich maneuver in an effort to clear his airway. On the second thrust, a chunk of bagel dislodged from Tokuhisa's throat.

"He came right to and asked what

happened," said Gilliam.

Gilliam, Parker and Minor proceeded to tell him the whole story.

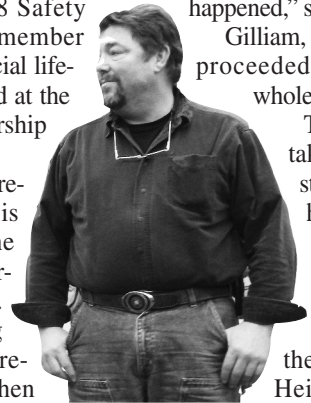
Tokuhisa was taken to the nurse's station, then sent to his doctor for a complete checkup. He is fully recovered.

Gilliam told the Labor Press the Heimlich maneuver was fresh in his mind because two weeks

earlier EC Company had conducted one of its regular first aid classes for foremen.

Gilliam has been a member of Local 48 for 28 years, starting as an apprentice in 1984. He has worked for EC Company since 1991.

For his lifesaving efforts, Gilliam received a \$200 gift certificate for Carhartt gear from Local 48's Safety Committee, and during their weekly safety meeting at Intel, Hoffman Construction presented him with a jacket in front of the entire 2,000 person workforce.



KIM GILLIAM

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